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USIB-D-18. 1/2

12 December 1969

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U N I T E D S T A T E S I N T E L L I G E N C E B O A R D

MEMORANDUM FOR USIB PRINCIPALS

SUBJECT : Release of Sensitive Intelligence Information
to Congress

1. In executive session at the 11 December USIB meeting, the Director of Central Intelligence expressed to the Board his concern with some of the problems involved in dealing with Congress regarding the release of highly classified intelligence information. He gave one example where sensitive compartmented intelligence had been provided to certain members of Congress and subsequently this information was sanitized and disseminated at a lower classification. Mr. Helms stressed the need in such a case to ensure that the recipients of the compartmented intelligence are advised of the true facts and warned against false confirmation based on the sanitized information.

2. Mr. Helms proposed that the intelligence community work together on these problems more closely than in the past. He stressed that, while continuing to make use of this sensitive material, it was essential that the right hand know what the left hand is doing.

3. Specifically, the DCI requested that, whenever briefings involving highly classified intelligence information were to be given to Congressional members, committees or staffs, they be checked out with him or his office so that he would know what is being done. Mr. Helms said that Mr. John M. Maury, his Legislative Counsel, would serve as a convenient check point in his office for handling this matter.

4. Mr. Helms also urged that no mention of specific National Intelligence Estimates be made in any reports or briefings given to Congress. He explained that appropriate material from these estimates could be used and even referred to as community views, but the NIE itself should not be identified.

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5. In summary, Mr. Helms emphasized two principal points. First he was convinced that no firm checklists or guidelines could be established to guide these releases to Congress. Second he believed that the rule of reason should prevail in handling this matter.

6. In conclusion Mr. Helms reiterated his conviction that, with the support of the Board, the intelligence community would benefit by working more closely together along the lines he had proposed.

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[Redacted]
Executive Secretary

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